



# Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

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## Prescribed fire helps restore open land wildlife habitat on Taylorsville Lake WMA



Wildlife Division used drip torches to conduct a controlled burn at Taylorsville Lake Wildlife Management Area last week.

**By Sunni Carr and Tom Edwards**

Fire has long been one of the most important tools available to the wildlife management professional. Many important wildlife habitats are dependent on some form of disturbance to stop succession.

Fire provides a safe, economical, and effective tool to control succession.

On March 12, 2007, the Taylorsville Lake Wildlife Management Area (TLWMA) was the site of the largest prescribed fire in the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' (KDFWR) history.

An 1,100 acre unit of cedar, pole timber and open fields were burned in an effort to "set back" succession. It is hoped that the fire will increase the habitat quality for small game species such as the northern bobwhite quail and eastern cottontail rabbits as well as songbirds and other non-game species.

When KDFWR acquired the TLWMA in the 1980's, more than 350 acres of open grassland existed in the Briar Ridge area. Today, due to the reduction in farming practices and a lack of fire, only 50 acres of grasslands remain.

Woody encroachment in these former grasslands is believed to have diminished use of the area by wildlife species dependent on open spaces.

KDFWR biologists hope this fire will reduce the amount of woody vegetation and restore open grassland habitat to 350 acres, while maintaining and improving the hardwood mast component on slopes

**See "Taylorsville," page 2.**

**Taylorsville, continued**

and in valleys.

The fire was initiated at 11:15 am. Fire crews, consisting of more than 20 employees from KDFWR's Wildlife and Law Enforcement divisions and the KY Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, were strategically located throughout the burn area.

Areas along roads and the control line were "blackened out" to create firebreaks and fires were lit in a staggered fashion to ensure a safe and effective burn. Once lit, grasses, shrubs and cedars as large as 25' in height were consumed by the fire.

This disturbance will stimulate new growth of grasses and forbs by enhancing soil chemistry and allowing light to penetrate areas once dominated by shrubs and cedar.

Additional fire and herbicide treatments in selected areas will be necessary to completely restore this area to a productive openlands system.

Experienced burn bosses, along with hard working crews and proper equipment, appear to have made this burn a success for wildlife management in Kentucky.

**Department employees on Kentucky Afield**

Kentucky Afield Television has instituted a new weekly feature on the show.

Each week a different employee will be featured. We want to show our viewers and license buyers how far their dollars go.

Over the next couple of months the television crew will interview approximately 40 department employees. These employee profiles will be used on the show throughout the year.

The next time you answer the phone it may be Kentucky Afield calling.

**Changes in statewide trout stocking schedules**

The Department annually stocks more than 800,000 rainbow and brown trout in streams, lakes, and tailwaters across Kentucky. All trout stocked in Kentucky are produced at the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery that is located below Lake Cumberland.

Water levels at Lake Cumberland have been recently lowered 43 feet to facilitate repairs to the Wolf Creek Dam. The lowered water levels have resulted in a 47% reduction in volume of water in the lake.

This reduction in lake level and volume will negatively impact the amount of cold water stored in the lake. Also the hatchery water intake system into the lake is not deep enough for this new lake level.

Both rainbow and brown trout require

well-oxygenated water with temperatures below 70 degrees year round to live. The reduced lake levels and corresponding reductions in the amount of cold water stored in Lake Cumberland threaten trout production during the summer months at the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery.

In addition, the reduced lake level has also resulted in reduced amounts of water being supplied to the hatchery through the gravity flow system as a result of loss of head pressure. This situation has resulted in the need to take a proactive approach to reduce the total amount of pounds of fish being reared at the hatchery.

To reduce the pounds of fish being

See "Stocking," page 4.

**Officers of the Year named**

Recently named and introduced to members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission at its March meeting by Colonel Bob Milligan (left) were (continuing from left) National Wild Turkey Federation Kentucky Officer of the Year Garry Clark (1st District), Boating Officer of the Year Glenn Kitchen (8th District), Kentucky Conservation Officer of the Year Jim Harrison (6th District), and Shikar Safari Officer of the Year Brian Bullock (9th District).





## Bullock Pen Lake dam repair

Bullock Pen Lake is a Department-owned lake located in Grant and Boone counties. It was constructed in 1953 and opened in 1955 to fishing.

It contains 134 acres and features largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish fishing. This lake also provides approximately 55% of the water supply for the Bullock Pen Water District.

Bullock Pen Lake Dam is considered a high-hazard (Class C) dam by Division of Water standards and has not been in compliance for several years. There is the potential for loss of life if this dam breaches; therefore, it has received this high-hazard classification.

Standards require the spillway to be capable of passing a 100-year storm event without "topping" the dam. There is no imminent failure of this dam and water has never topped the dam, but it requires remedial work.

An engineering consultant firm (hired by the Division of Water) has reviewed all the available options for the lake. The Department has chosen the option to retain the existing water level (134 acres). This will require raising the dam several feet to store more water during a storm event and enlarge the spillway to quickly pass more water.

A consulting firm is now designing the modifications and the Department is working with all the stakeholders.

Our first hurdle involves all the landowners around the lake, since this is a highly developed area in Northern Kentucky. Raising the dam will temporarily impound additional water and potentially impact some lake-front property owners.

The Department has a 50-ft easement around the lake and properties within this easement require no further action. The consultant has identified properties outside this zone. The Department, in conjunction with the Bullock Water Pen District, will be negotiating flood easements or any other necessary arrangements to flood these areas.

There are state-allocated funds for dam repairs and there will be approximately \$2 million available for this project. The design should be completed in 2007 and project will be bid for construction probably in 2008.

The Department may have to cost share some of the flood-easement issues and \$400,000 has been allocated for the Department's share. Federal Sport Fish Restoration funds can also be utilized for this commitment.

## Department website traffic increases

Department webmaster Donna Covington reports that traffic to the KDFWR website has doubled in most areas in the past 12 months.

Compare 93,674 website hits in January and February of this year with 42,554 for the same period one year ago.

Most of our entire site had an increase of 100% in the month of February. Here are some popular pages that Donna compared:

### February 2006

KDFWR Homepage	42,554
Hunting	12,961
News Column	554
License Sales	7,552
Kentucky Afield Home	2,712

### February 2007

KDFWR Homepage	93,674
Hunting	29,658
News Column	5,004
License Sales	14,829
Kentucky Afield Home	4,271

**Stocking, continued**

reared, most trout stockings are being moved up about two months earlier than were normally scheduled. For example, trout that normally were scheduled to be stocked in May will now be stocked by the end of March.

Most monthly stocking after May will also be moved up two months. At this time the only exceptions are the normally scheduled seasonal catch and release stream stockings and the lakes that would normally be stocked in October.

In the new stocking plan, these catch and release streams would have been stocked in August. However, these stockings would have been outside the catch and release season for these streams which runs from October 1 through the end of March.

Water temperatures, particularly in the lakes, will likely exceed the acceptable temperature for trout in August. These stockings are the only ones currently scheduled to occur at their normally scheduled October stocking dates.

As a result of moving the stocking schedule up two months, anglers may notice about a one inch decline in size of the fish being stocked. Numbers of fish stocked at each site will remain the same. This accelerated stocking plan will remain in effect through the remainder of this year.

Plans may change if conditions at the hatchery deteriorate this summer. Stay tuned for more updates should the situation worsen and require further modification.

Two million dollars in mitigation money has been requested to permanently fix this problem at the existing lake elevation. If the lake level is reduced additional feet in 2008, we will have additional problems. We hope the emergency grouting procedures beneath the dam that are now underway will preclude this drastic scenario.

## Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Archery Camp

The rapid growth of the Archery in the Schools Program has created interest in a specialty archery camp.

To meet this need the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is offering two weeks of specialized instruction for Kentucky students, ages 9-14, at an Archery Camp this year. Each one-week camp session will include expanded archery content. The two weeks will be July 9-13 and July 16-20.

Campers will receive expert instruction from Kentucky's statewide Archery Program Coordinator, Jennie Richardson, and other guest instructors.

This program will take kids beyond the basics of target archery. Campers will be introduced to 3D target shooting as well as receiving instruction in many areas not covered by the Archery in the Schools Program.

Campers arrive at camp Monday morning and return home Friday afternoon. After being assigned to cabins furnished with double-deck bunks, campers begin hands-on basic and advanced instruction in the safe pursuit of Archery – both as a

shooting sport and as a hunting technique.

Campers will participate in Basic Archery Instruction, Advanced Archery Instruction, Compound Bow Instruction, Advanced Genesis Instruction, 3-D Target Shooting, Olympic Target Shooting, Maintenance/Repair for Bows, Setting up Your New Bow, Building Arrows, Dealing with Competition Pressure, Tree stand Safety and Techniques, Hunter Education Certification and much more.

In addition to archery, many traditional camp activities will be offered. Campers will have a chance to earn their Hunter Education Card, shoot rifles and shotguns, swim in the lake, and fish.

The Archery Camp will be held at Camp Robert C. Webb on Grayson Lake in Carter County. Camper numbers are limited and campers will be accepted on a first come first served basis. The cost for the entire week is \$215 per camper.

An application can be found by clicking on the NASP logo on the department's home page. The success of this pilot project will be used to gauge the interest in other special camp sessions in the future.



Archery is currently taught at Conservation Camps, but a special archery-only camp is planned.





A Kentucky Becoming an Outdoors Woman participant paddles a kayak during a recent event.

## Thanks, BOW volunteers

The Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program has been an important tool for the KDFWR for more than a decade in educating women about the hunting, fishing, shooting and boating sports. It fits with one of our strategic plan objectives to significantly increase participation by women in wildlife-related recreation, as well as their support for conservation-related issues.

More than 3,500 participants have attended a BOW weekend workshop, which is 1/3 hunting, 1/3 fishing and 1/3 other outdoor-activity. Surveys show 70 percent of those either are or become license buyers because of the influence from this program.

Instruction at each workshop is provided by both agency employees and trained volunteers. We have a long-standing tradition that our personnel, regardless of division, lend help wherever they can to carry out quality programs. When called upon, our people respond in a spirit of cooperation I suspect doesn't occur anywhere else in government.

I want to express my appreciation to

those of you who find time in your schedules to assist in other efforts outside your normal jobs. Education is a responsibility that falls to all of us from time to time, and because we operate that way, is part of why we are a uniquely effective agency.

Beth Minch has successfully coordinated the BOW program on a volunteer basis for the last year. With five events scheduled for the next 12 months, she may be in contact with you for assistance. The BOW program puts our best foot forward with an important and growing group of constituents. I fully support that effort, and encourage you to as well when opportunity arises. The help you provide is important and worthwhile to our agency mission.

If there are ways you can help, or you have ideas regarding the BOW program, please contact Beth at [beth.minch@ky.gov](mailto:beth.minch@ky.gov). She will welcome any expertise you can lend and your willingness to assist with the program as an instructor or otherwise, to make it the best it can be.

Thanks for what you do.



## Urban Fishing Program's new name

For two years Kentucky has been exploring new ways to provide quality fishing to Kentuckians living in cities.

Recently, with the expert help of KDFWR graphic artist Obie Williams, the urban fishing program took on a new look with a new name.

Fishing in Neighborhoods, or FINS, is the new word that biologists will promote to get people excited about fishing in cities.

Fish stockings will continue to be an important part of the program with regular stockings of trout, catfish, and sunfish.

Check our website [fw.ky.gov/urbanfishing.asp](http://fw.ky.gov/urbanfishing.asp) for dates and locations of stockings.

Springs is just around the corner, so dust off your fishing poles and tackle boxes and try your luck at a keeper!

